



Maryland Department of Planning

Sustainable — Attainable

Press Release

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Online Training Course Provides Septics Law Primer

Planning Department Launches Multimedia Presentation on Law's Implementation

BALTIMORE, MD – Recognizing that a household using a septic system can pollute up to 10 times more than one on public sewer, Maryland's Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act is intended to protect the health of the Chesapeake Bay by limiting new residential growth on septic systems. The septic law, passed by the General Assembly in 2012, also aims to better manage growth in the state's rural, agricultural and resource-rich lands.

Designed to help county and municipal planning commission and advisory board members navigate the law, the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) last week launched an online training module. The multimedia "online class" uses audio, video and graphics to demonstrate to commission and board members and their staff how to implement the law.

The training covers the basics of four different growth tiers, which depict various levels of new residential development based on local land use plans and local sewerage plans. Tier I, for example, reflects areas served by public sewer, while Tier III areas typically are not planned for public sewer or characterized by lands planned or zoned for resource protection.

The focus of the training course is on how planning commissions and boards need to review subdivision applications in Tier III areas, including such elements as the level of existing and needed public services and potential environmental impacts. The training also specifies how planning commissions and boards can meet the transparency intent of the law with public hearings and formal resolutions.

This new module, a part of MDP's Planning Commissioner training efforts, furthers the agency's commitment to providing citizen planners with a foundation of knowledge to execute their duties. The course, "Maryland's Septics Law Module: What Planning Commissioners Need to Know," is at <http://planning.maryland.gov/OurWork/septicsBill/training>.

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